

That Which is Claimed

1. A merchandising system permitting participating merchants to place video or still-image advertisements at selected times and locations on a network of multiple electronic billboard displays, and permitting customers of the merchants to respond to the advertisements by directly placing orders for advertised products through an order processing system, said merchandising system comprising:

a network including a plurality of electronic billboard displays;

means permitting participating merchants to place video or still-image advertisements at selected times on selected ones of the network's electronic billboard displays;

the advertisements on the displays including a unique product order number for each product offered for sale by the participating merchants; and

an order processing system that permits customers to order products from the array of products offered by the participating merchants on the electronic billboard display advertisements, said order processing system including a customer interface for receiving incoming orders from customers ordering products by reference to the displayed product order numbers, means for matching each incoming product order to the customer placing the order, the product ordered and the participating merchant offering the product, and means for communicating sufficient customer and product information to the participating merchant so that the merchant can fulfill the order.

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2. The merchandising system of claim 1 wherein said means permitting participating merchants to place advertisements includes a central processing station to which merchants transmit their advertising content and means for routing the advertising content for display at the merchant-selected electronic billboard displays.

3. The merchandising system of claim 1 wherein said customer interface for receiving incoming orders from customers comprises a telephone interface including automated customer identification means.

4. The merchandising system of claim 3 wherein said automated customer identification means is selected from the group consisting of call no. ID and voice recognition.

5. The merchandising system of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the customers ordering through the order processing system utilize a GPS capable device and said order processing system employs GPS means for determining the location of customers during the customers' placement of orders.

6. A merchandising method permitting participating merchants to place video or still-image advertisements at selected times and locations on a network of multiple electronic billboard displays, and permitting customers of the merchants to respond to the advertisements by directly placing orders for advertised products through an order processing system, said merchandising system comprising:

    permitting a participating merchant to place video or still-image advertisements at selected times on selected electronic billboard displays;

    including in the advertisements a unique product order number for each product offered for sale by the participating merchants;

    each customer, when desiring to place an order for a participating merchant's advertised product, establishing contact with a central order processing system and entering the order number for the product desired; and

    the central order processing system matching each incoming product order to the customer placing the order, the product desired and the participating merchant offering the product, and communicating sufficient customer and product information to the participating merchant so that the merchant can fulfill the order.

7. The merchandising method of claim 6 including the step of at least a portion of the customers placing orders for advertised products establishing contact with the central product ordering system by GPS capable devices and communicating the customers' locations to the order processing system during placement of orders.

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